

# PADMANABHAMPURAM PALACE





## Background

Contained within the complex is a collection of 14 palaces and 127 beautiful royal rooms, many of which features ornate wood carvings. The carved ceilings of the palace depict 90 varieties of flowers. Paintings, hundreds of years old and stone statues (some over 1000 years old) are on display on the palace grounds.

- Located inside an old granite fortress around 4km long.
- Located at the foot of the Western Ghats.
- The river Valli flows nearby.
- Was constructed around 1601 A.D. by Iravipillai Iravivarma Kulashekhara Perumal who ruled Travancore between 1592 and 1609.



Padmanabhapuram Palace got its present name when it was rebuilt in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, using granite in most of the parts of the outer fort, by Marthanda Varma, King of Travancore during this period , who named the palace after the name of the prime deity of Travancore, Lord Padmanabhaswamy, a reclining form of lord Vishnu.



# Padmanabhapuram palace



- Padmanabhapuram Palace is located in at Padmanabhapuram Fort, close to the town of Thuckalay in Kanyakumari District, Tamilnadu.
- It is about 20 km from Nagercoil, and about 50 kilometers from Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.

# Building materials



- Padmanabhapuram palace is the one of the finest examples of wooden architecture in Kerala region. Kerala is rich in timber and fine clay – the latter being used for tile and brick making – laterite stone, granite and shell lime. Padmanabhapuram Palace Architecture is a masterpiece of Kerala's wooden architecture.
- Walls -The walls are made of laterite, granite or bricks or a combination of them.



- Walls-The walls form only a small portion of the total visible structure, and the roof-forms dominate all other elements. Wood and stone pillars support the wooden roof structure, and the walls are infilled with brick or laterite and, in some cases, with non structural wooden screens.
- These screens filter the light inside, provide privacy and allow, unhindered breeze to flow at habitation level.

# Wooden works



CHARUPADIES



PILLARS

# Buliding materials



- The main walls are finished in lime plaster and white-washed with sea-shell lime, also in abundance in Kerala. The sober white-washed walls are relieved by intricate wooden screens which are often projected out as balconies or seating, while the smaller windows are shuttered in wooden frames and fitted with mica sheets.







- The flooring – using shell lime, charcoal and other indigenous ingredients – is finished in black. The aesthetic quality of this palace might be described as a subtle combination of sophisticated understatement in design and a tactile celebration of the material used.



- Ceiling-Decorative wooden false ceilings are provided in some important rooms which help to insulate them.



- Roofing-The roofs are however ventilated at the ridge with the use of decorative wooden screens.



- All the older structures in the Padmanabhapuram Palace have roof systems based on varying angles of rafters, except for the Lakshmi Vilasam Palace which was built in semi-colonial style.
- Public areas having slope 45degree and private areas angle of the roof is 30degree eg -Thekkekkottaram



## Other Important Features



- In the interior, the seats are built into the wooden-screen structures with porous side walls on the periphery of rooms or in balconies specially meant for seating purposes. The mantra shala on the first floor, where the king met his ministers, is an example of this.
- A number of decorative elements are also used in the palace, especially wood and stone carvings of animals and birds in various positions. Vyali, a mythical animal which can take changing forms of different animals, is used traditionally as a supporting bracket to overhanging eaves and columns.



# Plan of palace







# Structures in the palace

- Poomugham (entrance hall)
- Mantrasala (King's Council chamber)
- Thai Kottaram (Mother's Palace)
- Natakasala (Hall of Performance)
- Upparika Malika (King's Quarters) Four storied building at the center of palace complex
- Thekee Kottaram (Southern Palace)
- Uttupura (Ceremonial feasting hall)

Other structures are Kannadithalam, Navarathri mandapam, Indravilasom and Chandravilasom.

# Mantrasala (Council Chamber)



- Most beautiful part of the entire palace.
- Has windows, with colored mica, which keeps the heat and the dust away and the inside of the council chamber remains cool and dark.
- Delicate and beautiful lattice work.
- The floor is dark colored and is made of a mixture of varied substance, including burnt coconut shells, egg white and so on.







## Thai Kottaram (Mother's Palace)

- Mother's palace is the oldest construction in the entire palace complex and is believed to be constructed around mid-16<sup>th</sup> century.
- Full to the traditional Kerala style, there is an inner courtyard, called "NAALUKETTU".
- Four pillars on four corners support the roof.







- On the southwest corner, there is a relatively small room called the chamber of solitude – EKAANTHAMANDAPAM.
- Of particular interest is a pillar of single jackfruit wood, with very detailed and beautiful floral designs.
- A secret tunnel over one kilometre long from this building provided the royal family with an escape route in times of war. (CHAROTTU KOTTARAM)



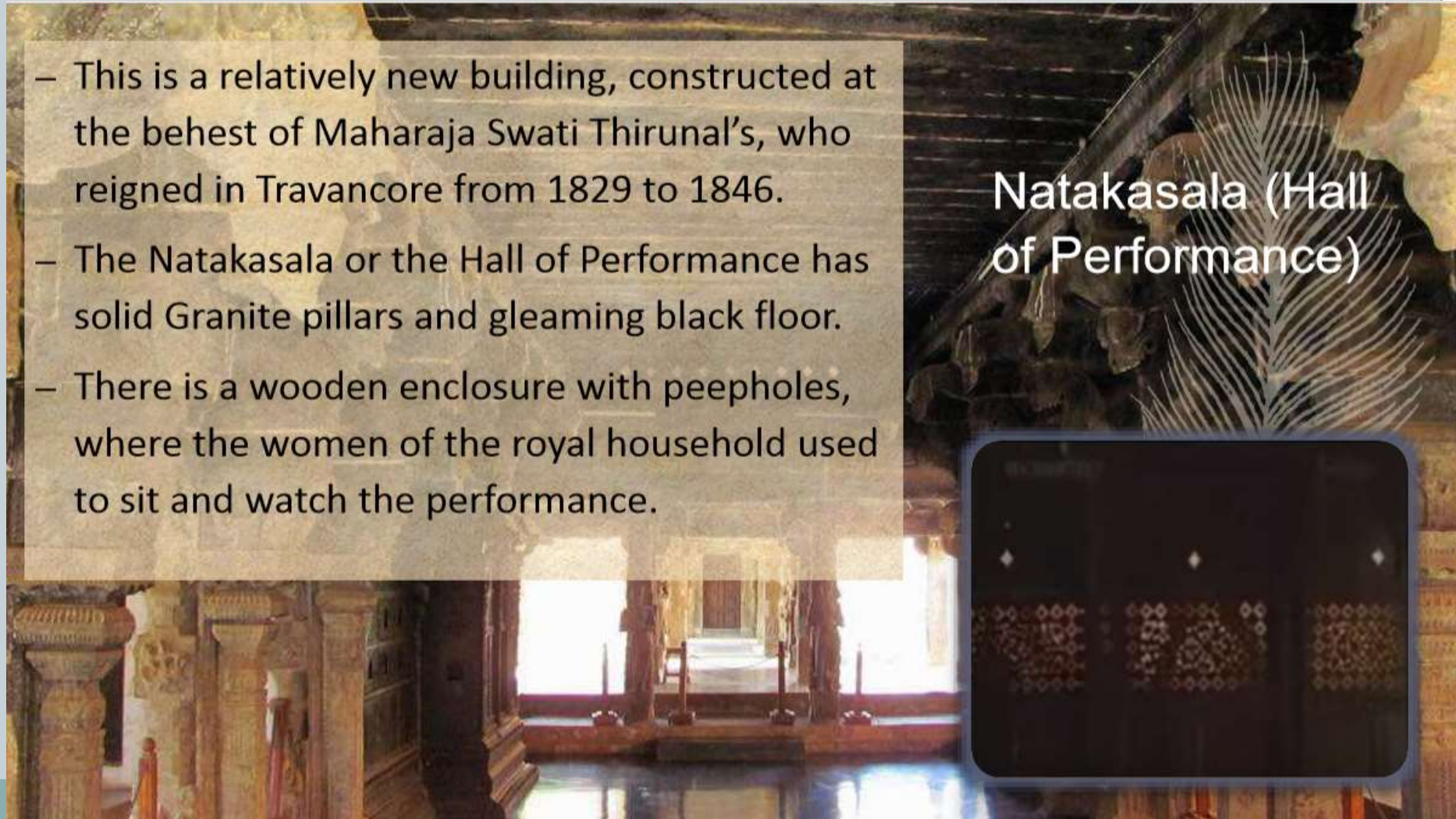


# Natakasala



- This is a relatively new building, constructed at the behest of Maharaja Swati Thirunal's, who reigned in Travancore from 1829 to 1846.
- The Natakasala or the Hall of Performance has solid Granite pillars and gleaming black floor.
- There is a wooden enclosure with peepholes, where the women of the royal household used to sit and watch the performance.

Natakasala (Hall of Performance)





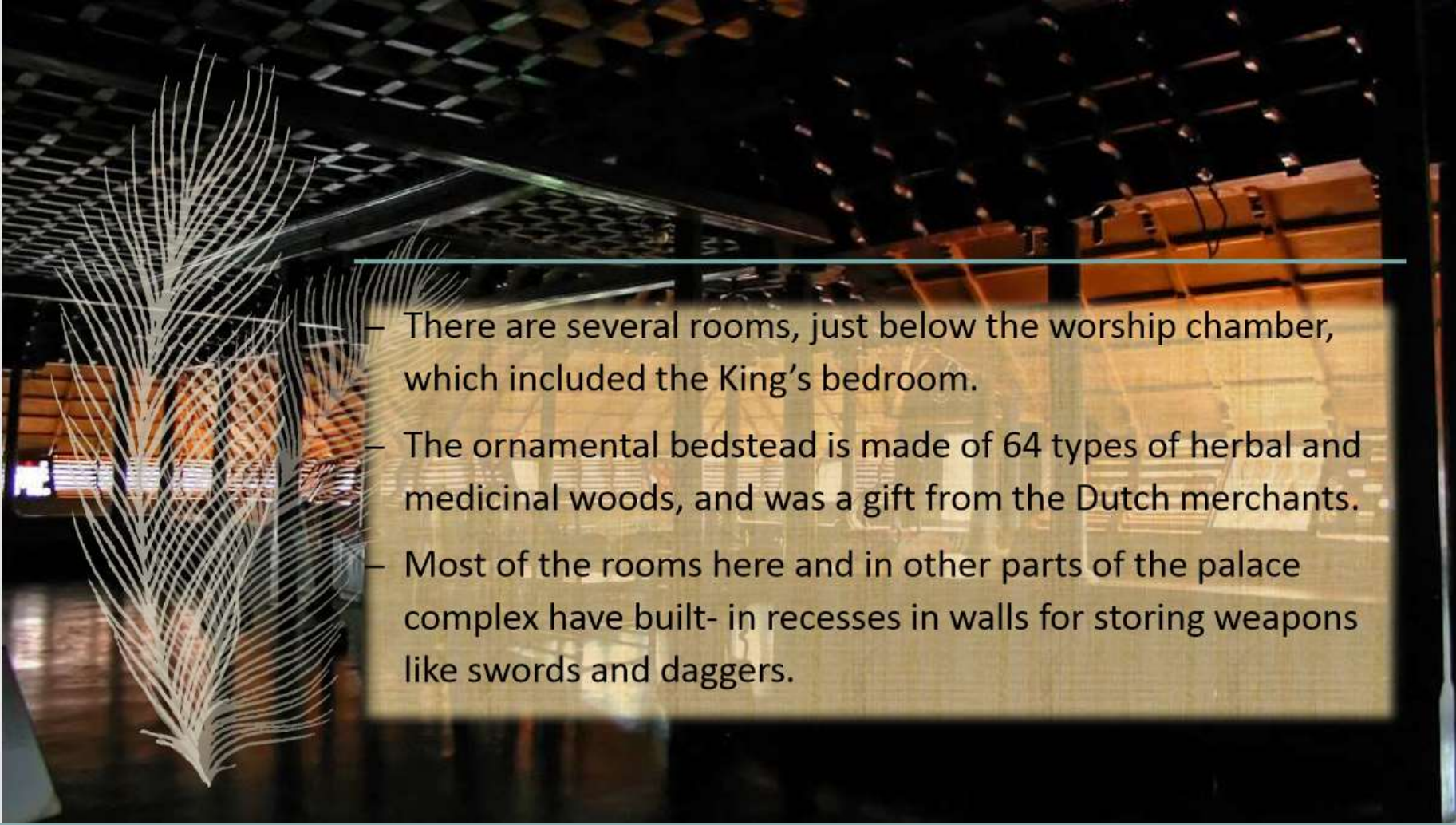




# Uparika Malika

- The four storied building is located at the center of the palace complex.
- The top floor served as the worship chamber of the royal household.
- Its walls are covered with exquisite 18<sup>th</sup> century murals, depicting scenes from the puranas, and also few scenes from the social life of the Travancore of that time.



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- The background of the slide is a photograph of an interior space, likely a palace. On the left, there is a large, ornate white structure that resembles a stylized plant or a large feather. The ceiling is dark and features a grid of small, square, recessed lights. In the background, there are wooden structures, possibly part of a bedstead or a storage unit, with a warm, orange-brown glow. The overall atmosphere is dimly lit and historical.
- There are several rooms, just below the worship chamber, which included the King's bedroom.
  - The ornamental bedstead is made of 64 types of herbal and medicinal woods, and was a gift from the Dutch merchants.
  - Most of the rooms here and in other parts of the palace complex have built-in recesses in walls for storing weapons like swords and daggers.









## Thekee kottaram (Southern Palace)

- The southern palace is as old as the Thaikottaram, which would make it, 400 years old.
- Now, it serves as a heritage museum, exhibiting antique household articles and curios.
- Collections of items give an insight into the social and cultural ethos of that period



# Oottupura

- To have a catering capacity of 2000 meals per day.
- It is the common dining hall for all the people within the palace complex.







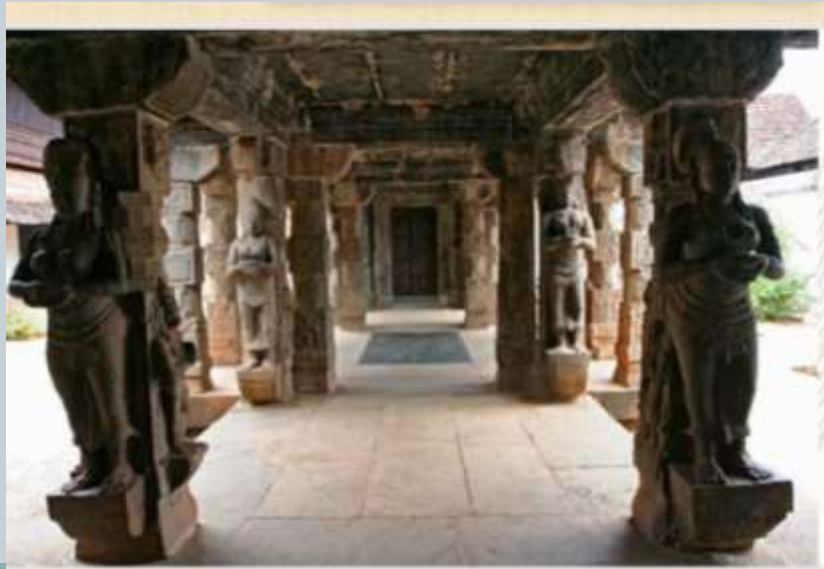


## Navarathri Mandapam

A complete stone  
structure of approx.  
66' \* 27' used for  
festivities.











The clock tower in the palace complex has a 300 year old clock, which still keeps time.



## Ambari Mukhappu

- ‘Ambari’ is actually the seat put on elephants back for safaris.
- For the Kings to view chariot races during festivals and to appear before the public on special occasions.



# Tank





The effect in the interior is a dramatic play of light and shadow, with the occasional mica-paned window adding color. One of the most significant elements in the design of the Padmanabhapuram Palace, Kerala is this sensitive handling of light and the ambiance of sensual repose it creates.







# Effect of Vasthu Principles

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- The entrance gateway is found to have the golden ratio.
- The upparika malika has a breadth to height ratio of 1:2, making the structure look gorgeous and grand.
- All the buildings have a square or rectangular plan as they hold positive energy.
- Right angles are good for construction.
- The slope of the roof of a public space is 45 degree whereas that of a private space cannot exceed 30 degree. E.g. Thekee kottaram.



# Effect of climate

## Roof

Gabled roofs.

- Serves the function of effective drainage of rainwater off the roof.

## Sunshades

No sunshades.

- Palace buildings oriented in directions where direct sunlight won't be available.





## Effect of function/activity

Security

- Plan and most aspects been designed after security consideration.
- Plan and pathways made complex and complicated.

Windows

- Constructed for the women to view activities happening in courtyards.
- For the king to view the courtyard.
- To increase air circulation by wind.

Mandapam

- Built with stone to serve function of stage.
- Cabin in the for of cuboid for the queen.

Treasury doors

- Built to smaller scales than other doors to restrict the entry of people.

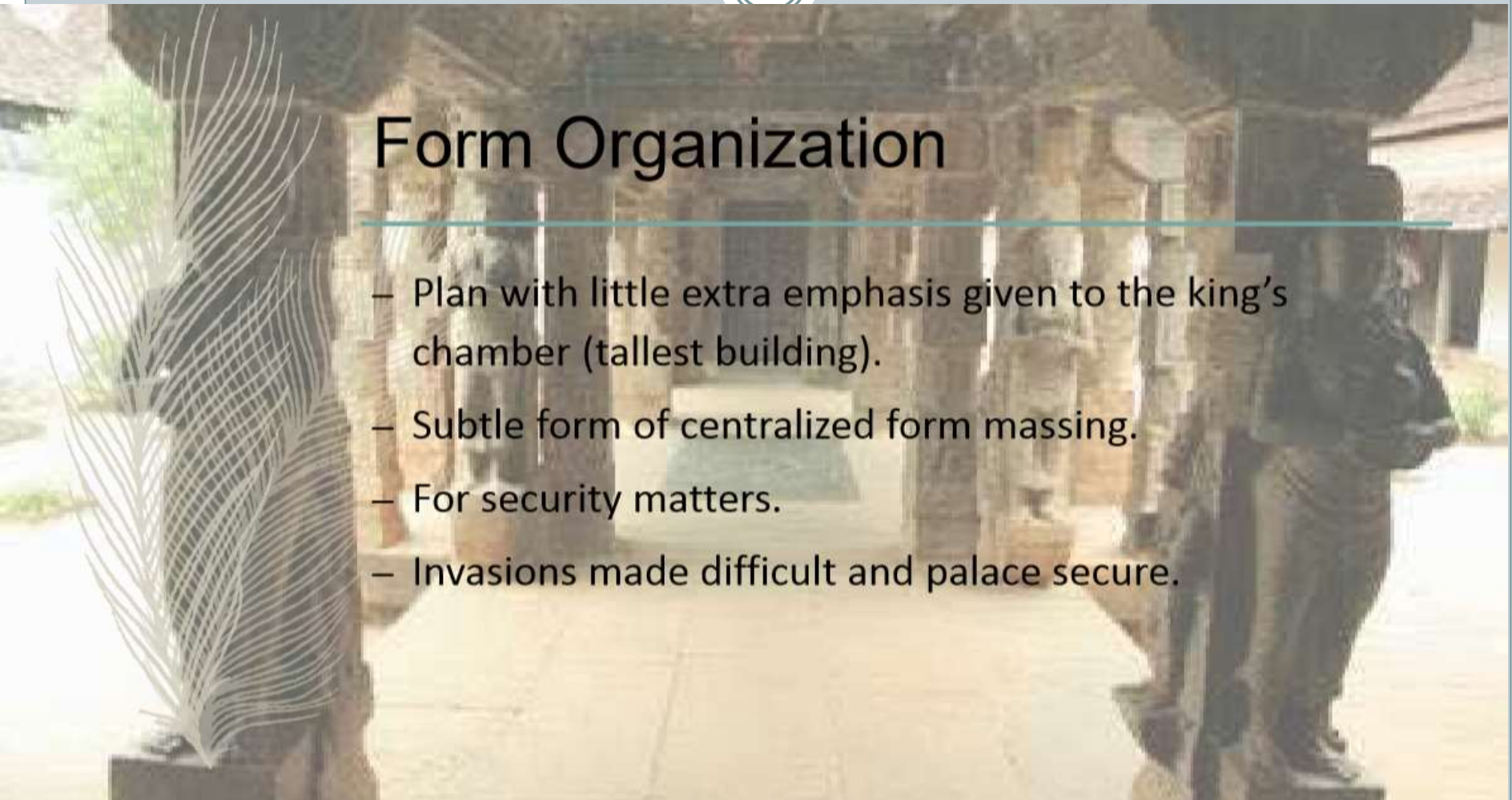




# Form Organization

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- Plan with little extra emphasis given to the king's chamber (tallest building).
- Subtle form of centralized form massing.
- For security matters.
- Invasions made difficult and palace secure.





# Composition

## Gateway

- Intersection of regular forms.
- Trapeziums intersect to give a new polygonal form in elevation.
- Decorative wood carvings inside the triangular portion are irregular in form.

## Mantrashala

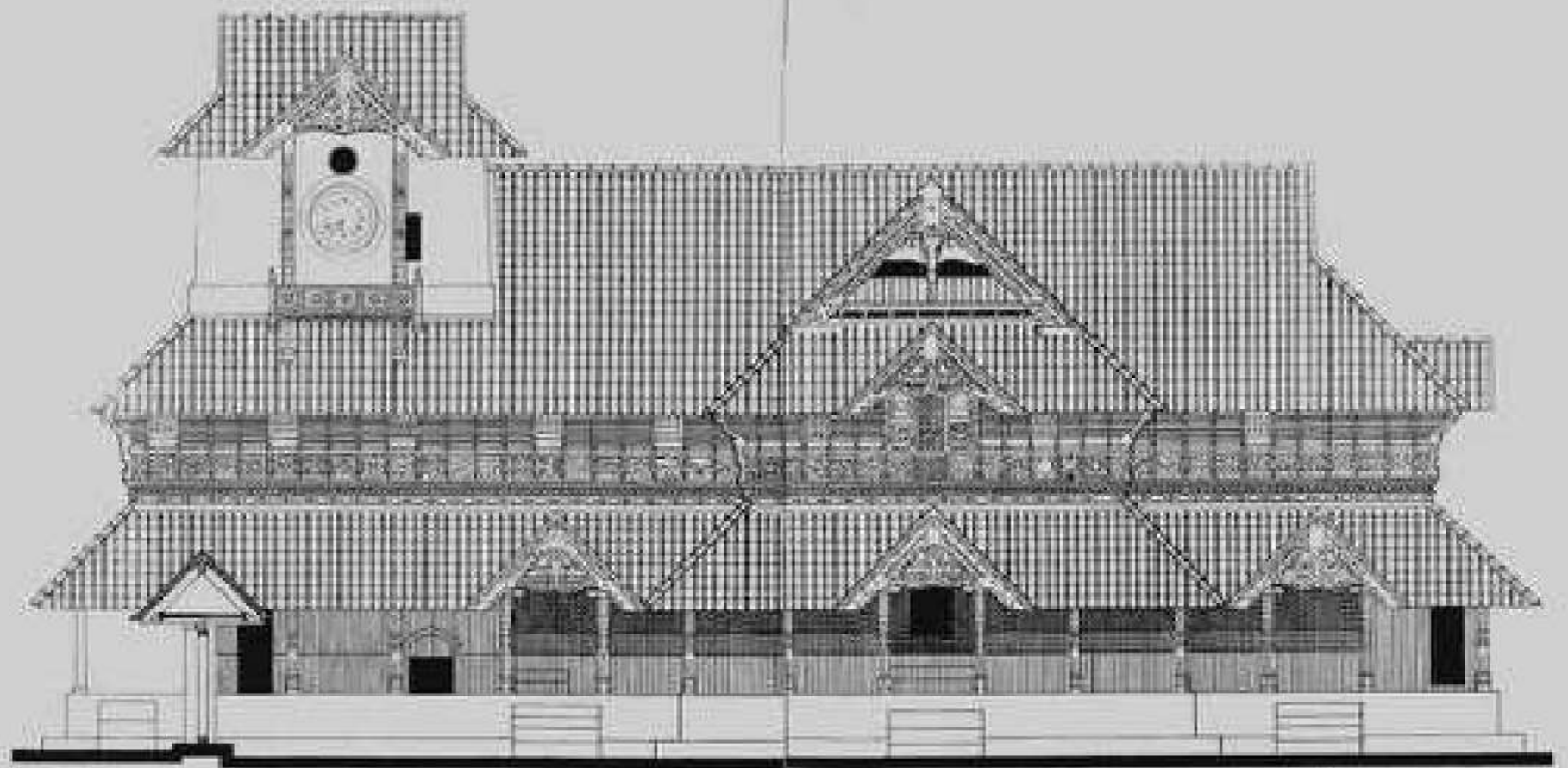
- INTERIOR- Fenestrations to let light inside which again results in the creation of new forms.
- EXTERIOR- Wood carvings give a desired decorative effect.

## Uparika Malika

- Influence of Chinese architecture.



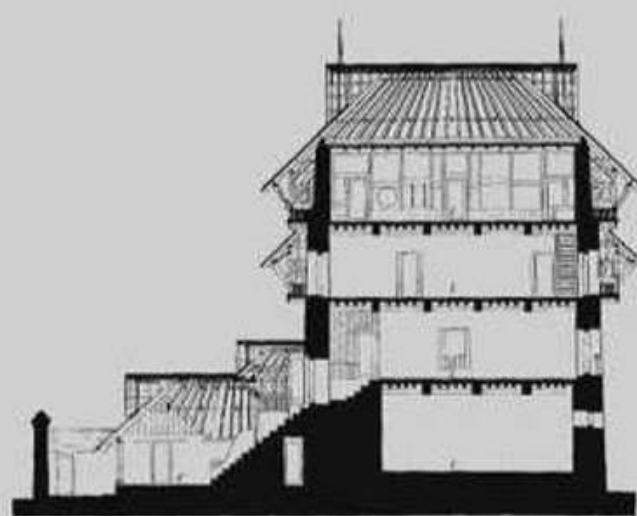
IN-DOOR HALLS  
PADMANABHAPURAM PALACE





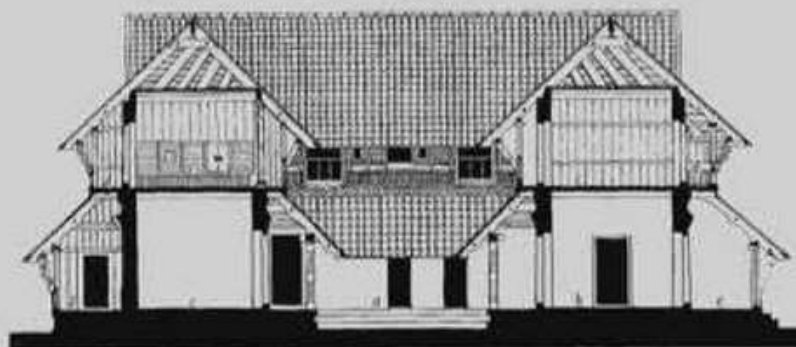


*Section 1, King's residence.*



*Section 2, King's residence.*

- a. Courtyard*
- b. Stair*
- c. Room*
- d. Passage*
- e. Verandah*
- f. Balcony*



*Section, mother palace.*

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